

BBC liaison

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, FBIS

DATE: 27 May 1954

FROM : Chief, Radio Propaganda Branch

SUBJECT: Requirements on BBC Monitoring Service

The increasing use of the analysis of Communist propaganda in arriving at U.S. intelligence estimates, as well as in planning psychological operations, has expanded and sharpened the requirements of this Branch for raw materials. BBC's coverage of the most authoritative Soviet materials is of critical importance in this respect, so that our requirements on Caversham are more severe than those on our own bureaus. Following are some respects in which Branch requirements are currently not fully satisfied by BBC's service, excellent as that is.

1. Translation

Precise renditions of authoritative Soviet statements are indispensable. Early BBC versions frequently show a lack of background knowledge of Soviet practices, ideology, or personalities. For example, "The Central Committee requests" for "The Central Committee demands," and "Agitprop chief Khrushchev" for "Agitprop chief Kruzhkov." Perhaps the assignment of BBC's most experienced monitors to the most authoritative materials could be further maximized.

2. Selection: theoretical lectures

Theoretical lectures by not ostensibly authoritative speakers occasionally signal the existence or the resolution of ideological disputes among Soviet leaders. We need sufficiently detailed summaries of such lectures to determine whether a request for full text is warranted.

3. Recording

- a. LD 637 of 24 March informed that 4 of 8 commentaries from which material had been requested had not been recorded. All monitored Soviet material should be recorded, including repeats, for cross-checking.
- b. Increasing requirements for retrospective research make it desirable that BBC retain recordings of Soviet broadcasts for 90 days, if possible. Some recordings have in the past been reported "lost" even within the 30-day period.
- c. Permanent retention of recordings of Soviet leader speeches broadcast live or recorded is a requirement, and permanent retention of all Soviet radio commentaries not taken from the press is desirable.

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4. The principal basis for quantitative statements about Soviet propaganda, the daily list of Moscow commentaries, is fairly reliable, but a residue of inaccuracy seems concentrated in certain languages, suggesting the possibility that all BBC language teams are not uniformly oriented in FBIS requirements. Specifically, there are significantly fewer listable items per hour of monitoring reported in Bulgarian, Czech-Slovak, Hungarian, and Hindustani than in other languages, and these same languages also show a higher percentage of scheduled bulletins quite unaccounted for, even as unintelligible or containing no listable items.

There continues also to be difficulty in a few cases in obtaining a sufficient summary or description of commentaries for listing purposes.

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